



THE HOUSE OF  
**MYSTERY**



CELEBRATE A  
CARNIVAL OF FEAR  
WITH THE  
**BALLOON VENDOR**

30¢  
NO. 242  
JUNE  
30830

DO YOU DARE ENTER... THE HOUSE OF

# MYSTERY



**ALL-NEW  
CHILLS**



11. 2000

...AND WELCOME-~~TO~~-~~TO~~-TO GU'CAN'S HOUSE OF MYSTERY, WHERE ANOTHER CARNIVAL OF HORROR IS ABOUT TO GET UNDER WAY! SEE THAT MAN SELLING-~~THE~~ RAINBOWS DOWN THERE? HE'S ANNOY MODEL!

**THE BALLOON  
VENDOR!**



HOWARD?  
HOWARD?  
FACE THAT  
ALONE GO  
AWAY?

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED,  
DEAR. IT'S ONLY THE  
STATION CAR BEING  
USED TO INFLATE  
TOMMY'S BALLOON.

YEAH!  
**NOPE!**  
AN' LOOOST  
THAT  
MONSTER  
BALLOON!  
IT'S  
GROOVY!

FLYING

ROBERT J. RUSSELL, CHAIR



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High protein diet helps slow age-related weight loss. *Experimental weight loss could be linked to the same genetic defect that causes the condition called Marfan's syndrome, a disorder of connective tissue that causes the heart and blood vessels to stretch and tear. The study, published in the journal *Science*, found that mice with a mutation in the gene that causes Marfan's syndrome also had a high protein diet helped to slow the weight loss.*

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## non sono



ANDY NOBEL LOVED KIDS AND THE KIDS WHY YOU COULD TELL BY THE HAPPY LOOKS ON THEIR FACES THAT THEY LOVED GUY ANDY TOO. BUT THERE WAS ALSO A WOMAN IN ANDY'S LIFE. SHE WAS A SNAKE CHARMER NAMED GUY LYNN FOSTER, AND ANDY WOULD'VE GIVEN JUST ABOUT ANYTHING TO MAKE HER SMILE AT HIM THE WAY ALL THE LITTLE KIDS DID...





WELL, YOU DID JUST FIND, SUGAR-PIE! I THINK I LOOK FAIRLYFINE IN EM!

I-I WAS SHOPPING-- (I-I MEAN, I-I THOUGHT M-M YEE. A AFTER YOUR SH-SHOW TONIGHT... M-ME C-COULD-- C-COULD G--



OH, I DON'T THINK SO TONIGHT, AMY DABY! I'M GONNA BE PRETTY BUSY TONIGHT! MAYBE--

TA-THEN H-HOW ABOUT--



SURE, AMY, SURE!

MAYBE SOME OTHER NIGHT! WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT, OKAY?

BECAUSE I DON'T SELL PINKBOY ANY WOODEN BALLOONS, HEARTS THEY GIVE YOU SPLINTERS!

B-BUT-- BUT--

THAT WAS HOW IT ALWAYS WENT BETWEEN GARY LANN AND AMY. HE TRIED TO PLEASE HER-- HE TRIED HARD-- BUT SOMEHOW THINGS JUST ALWAYS SEEMED TO WORK OUT. AND THEN, THE NEXT AFTER-NOON...



HEY YOU! VOSEL!

HEY YOU ARE LITTLE--

WAAH-- IF



N-NEP

YOU'RE LATE ON YOUR PINKBOY'S AGAIN, VOSEL!

AND YOU KNOW THE SUNDAY... IT'S GOT THIS THING ABOUT LATENESS!

YEAH, YOU VOSEL! I DON'T PLAY PINKBOY! YOU KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE!

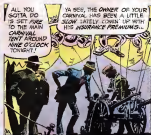


B-BUT P-PLEASE! I-I JUST N-NEED A LITTLE M-MORE--

FORGET IT, VOSEL! YOUR TIME'S UP!

WA WANTA GET YOURSELF IN ABOX UP TO YOUR PINKBOY'S SUITS, TRINKETS FOR YOUR GAWDRENDS THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS...

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ANDY TRIED HIS BEST BUT GUY LAMM JUST WOULDN'T LISTEN. BY NOW, GLOCK, THE CARNIVAL'S MAIN TENT WAS BUCKED TO OVERFLOWING WITH HAPPY PARTIES AND LAUGHING, CHEERING KIDS, WHILE OUTSIDE...



THE FLAMES DEVoured THE PILE OF WOOD AND STRAW AND LAPPED HUNGRILY AT THE DRY CORNERS OF THE TENT. WITHIN MOMENTS, THE ALARM WAS SOUNDED.



THE CARNIVAL FIRE-FIGHTING CREW TRIED BRAVELY TO FIGHT THE BLAZE, AND BEFORE LONG THE CITY FIRE DEPT. HAD COME SCREAMING TO THE SCENE.



AND BY THE TIME THE LAST FLAME HAD BUCKERED AND DIED, THE TENT WAS A CHARRED RUIN, AND ASHEN-FACED MEN GRIMLY TABULATED THE DEAD...





BY THE TIME ANDY RETURNED TO HIS TRAILER,  
IT WAS FIVE A.M., AND...





YES, THE MONKEY  
WAS DESERTED,  
BUT IT WAS NOT  
ENTIRELY  
DESERTED  
FOR AMED THE  
RE-CROWNED  
ARMIES OF THE  
GREAT TENT,  
SOMETHING  
GANGSTY WAS  
STIRRING,  
AND THAT  
SOMETHING  
WAS...

HE SURE DID  
GUSH! YOU CAN  
SEE THAT  
CARDINAL  
OWNER, RIGHT?

LOOKIT THAT!  
WH-WHAT THE  
BLOODY BLUE  
SLATES IS  
THREATENING?

POW!

IT'S S-GONE  
KINDA SPOOKS!  
I-I'M GETTIN'  
OUTA HERE!

WITH THE REGENERATION OF DOOMED MEN,  
THE HOODLUMS RACED ACROSS THE CARNIVAL  
GROUNDS...

BUT WHERE IS THERE TO RUN, AFTER  
ALL, WHEN THE MONSTER ITSELF IS AT YOUR  
HEELS...?



IT'S NO  
USE...  
VINCE!  
TH-THOSE  
TH-THINGS!  
TH-THEY'RE  
STILL...  
G-GONNA!



IT'S A  
P-PEAK AND  
VINCE!

P-PEAK  
END!

I-LOOK, YOU SURE G-GOT IT  
ALL AROUND! W-WH-HE DIDN'T  
DO ANYTHIN'!

T-THE  
P-PEAK  
WINDOR  
DO IT!



W- GOTTA  
B-BELIEVE US!  
FOR  
TH' LORD'S  
GOD...



MEANWHILE...

MAYBE  
THOSE GUYS  
WERE RIGHT!

WHY SHOULD I  
WORRY ABOUT  
THE PEOPLE  
WHO DIED IN  
THE FIRES?

THEY  
DIDN'T  
MEAN  
NOTHIN'  
TO ME!







THE CITY HAS  
MANY FACES.  
SEEN FROM  
ABOVE, IT IS A  
JEWELLED  
SHIP FLOATING  
IN A SEA OF  
BLACK VELVET...



IT GIVES US THE COLLECTIVE  
LAUGHTER OF WOMEN TO CREATE A  
BIRCH BOND...

IT GIVES US SAFETY AND PLEASANT  
DREAMS...



IT ALSO GIVES US SLEEPERS  
WHO MOAN AND MUTTER AS  
THEY DREAM THEIR TORTURED  
NIGHTMARES--MEN WHO DAILY  
SELL THEIR SOULS FOR THE  
SPOTS THAT BRING THEM  
PEACE--ON THE NIGHT ONE  
OF THEM WILL TRY TO BUY  
THAT PEACE WITH...

# BLOOD MONEY

JOB! JOB!  
WAKE UP!

W-WHAT FOR?  
T-THE BOTTLES  
EMPTY, BUT IT'S  
YOU--



STORY:  
JACK OLSEN  
ART:  
JESSE JOSEPHSON

THIS IS THE DARK  
UNDERBELLY OF  
THE CITY.

HERE DRUNK  
TRENCHES SQUAT  
LIKE USUAL THINGS  
AND EVERY ALLEY  
IS THE HIGHWAY  
TO A PRIVATE HELL.

FUZZ!  
GET DOWN!  
YOU JERK!  
THEY'LL SPOT  
US!

HEY! HE'S  
DROPPED  
SOMETHING!  
HE--

SHUT UP!  
I TOLD YOU!  
IF THOSE FUZZ  
SEE US, WE'LL  
BE IN THE  
SLAMMER  
TONIGHT!

HERE REAR STALKS  
THE NIGHT AND EVEN  
WINE-SOAKED BRAINS  
CAN THINK OF ONE  
THING ONLY--SURVIVAL.

WYEAH? YEAH.  
HE CAME OVER THE  
FENCE? B-BUT HE  
KEPT GOING? C-OFFICERS.  
WE HAVEN'T DONE ANY-  
THING. I-HONEST.  
WE--

COME  
ON! THESE  
GUYS ARE  
NO HELP!

THE FOOTSTEPS OF  
THE POLICE REcede,  
AND IN THE EMPTY  
CLAWY SILENCE THAT  
FOLLOWS, WINE-ROTTED  
BRAINS STRUGGLE TO  
UNDERSTAND.

A HOSPITAL?  
SOME GUYS ARE CRAZY  
ENOUGH TO TRY ANY-  
THING, WHY--

ALL RIGHT, YOU  
TWO, GET UP! A MAN  
JUST CAME THROUGH  
THE ALLEY! HE BOBBED  
THE GENERAL HOSPITAL  
A FEW MINUTES AGO!  
DID EITHER OF YOU  
SEE HIM?

JOE--  
LOOK! HE  
LEFT NO  
FOOTST  
BEHIND!



A WALLET?  
MAYBE OUR LUCK  
HAS FINALLY  
TURNED? WE'RE  
GONNA DO SOME  
HARD DRAGON  
TONIGHT?

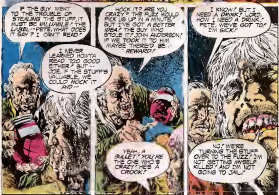
THE GUSTING WIND  
VIBRATED OVER  
TREMBLING FINGERS  
STRUGGLING WITH A  
BIT OF SWART-SKINNED  
LEATHER--AND  
SUDDENLY THE ALLEY  
IS FILLED WITH SOUND:  
THE SOUND OF RAGE.

NOTHING? NOT  
A DOLLAR? JUST A  
FEW CARDS? JOHN  
ANDERSON? I HOPE  
THE PUZZ CATON  
KILL HIM. I HOPE THEY  
KILL HIM.

JOE--THE  
CATON? THE  
CATON HE DROPPED?  
MAYBE THERE'S  
SOMETHING IN--



JOE? JUST  
TALK? ANDERSON?  
IT'S SOME KIND OF  
MISDEED? I KNEW IT?  
I NEVER GET A BREAK?  
NEVER! UNLESS--



IF THE GUY WENT  
TO THE TROUBLE OF  
STEALING THE STUFF, IT  
MUST BE VALUABLE? THE  
LADY--PETE, WHAT DOES  
IT SAY? I CAN'T READ.

WACK IT ARE YOU  
CRAZY? THE PUZZ WOULD  
PICK UP IN A MINUTE,  
BUT I'VE GOT A BETTER  
IDEA? THE GUY WHO  
STOLE IT? JOHN ANDERSON?  
IF WE TOOK IT TO HIM,  
MAYBE THERE'D BE A  
REWARD?

I KNOW? BUT I  
NEED A DRINK? LORD,  
HOW I NEED A DRINK?  
PETE, WE'VE GOT TO?  
I'M SICK?

I NEVER  
LEARNED HONTA  
READ TOO GOOD  
EITHER? BUT--  
JOE, IF THE STUFF'S  
VALUABLE, WE  
COULD WACK IT  
AND--

YEAH, A  
BULLET? YOU'RE  
THE ONE WHO'S  
CRAZY? HE'S A  
CROOK?

NO? WE'RE  
TURNING THE STUFF  
OVER TO THE PUZZ? I'M  
NOT GETTING MYSELF  
KILLED? AND I'M NOT  
GOING TO JAIL.





PETE: I TOLD YOU--  
I'M BACK! WE'VE GOT TO  
GO TO THAT ANDERSON  
GUY! WE'VE GOT TO!

AND I  
SAID NOTHING  
DOING? I'M  
PLAYING IT  
SAFE!



FOR THE PRICE OF A  
HEARTBEAT THERE IS  
SILENCE AFTER THAT.  
TWO LAMELESS HULKS  
THAT ONCE WERE MEN  
THINK EACH THEIR OWN  
THOUGHTS. SUDDENLY...

SNAP

WHNA--!



THE BLADE GLISTENS  
SPARKLING FOR AN  
INSTANT.

AND THEN-- THE  
SPARKLE VANISHES!



JOHN ANDERSON--  
32, ASTOR STREET-- JOHN  
ANDERSON-- 32, ASTOR  
STREET-- I'VE GOT TO  
REVERSE-- JOHN  
ANDERSON-- THREE  
TWO, ASTOR--



COLD RAIN LIKE TEARS  
OF ACC Drip FROM THE  
HULING FIGURE THAT  
STUMBLES ALONG UN-  
RAVAGED STREETS.  
STREET LIGHTS MAKE  
GREAT MISTLETOE  
SHADOWS...



UNTIL, AT LAST THERE  
IS A DOORWAY DARK AS  
THE NIGHT ITSELF...

32

JOHN ANDERSON

I MADE  
IT! THIS HAS  
GOT TO WORK!  
IT'S GOT  
TO--



YES?

MR. ANDERSON?  
I HAVE SOMETHING  
OF YOURS? I FOUND IT  
WITH YOUR WALLET? SO  
I'M RETURNING IT.  
I'M AN HONEST  
MAN--



MY PACKAGE YOU BROUGHT  
IT BACK TO ME, I'M GRATE-  
FUL YOU DON'T KNOW HOW  
EARLY I NEED IT--

GRATEFUL?  
ONLY--GRATEFUL?  
I THOUGHT--  
THERE'D BE A  
REWARD--



A REWARD? I SEE.  
I'D GLADLY PAY YOU FOR  
YOUR TROUBLE, BUT--  
I'M SORRY I'M AFRAID  
I HAVE NO MONEY--

NO MONEY?  
NO MONEY?  
BUT YOU MUST  
HAVE, YOU  
MUST!



THE DESPERATION COVERS THEIR  
DESPERATION THAT DRIVES  
AWAY EVEN DEARER DESPERATION  
THAT MAKES CLINGING  
CLAMS OF DIRTY RAGGED  
THAT PUTS THEM INTO A SPINE  
LONG BENT BY HOPELESS-  
NESS--

YOU MUST! I'VE GOT  
TO HAVE THAT REWARD,  
AND YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE  
IT TO ME! I KNOW WHAT'S  
IN THE CARTON! AND IF I  
DON'T GET MY REWARD  
I'LL GO TO THE POLICE!  
I SWEAR IT!

YOU  
KNOW--  
WHAT'S  
IN THE  
CARTON?



YES! YOU  
STOLE IT! AND  
WHEN I TELL  
THE COPS--

I SEE, BUT THERE'S  
NO NEED TO GO TO THE  
POLICE. I HAVEN'T BEEN VERY  
GRATEFUL, HAVE I? I DON'T  
STOP TO THINK, BUT I  
WAS WRONG.



IT SEEMS THEN THAT  
THE WIND BLOWS LOUDER!  
ALMOST AS IF IT WERE  
SHREEKING A WARNING!  
BUT IT IS A WARNING  
THAT RALLS ON DEAF  
EARS...

COME IN MY  
FRIEND, COME IN--  
AND I'LL SEE WHAT  
I CAN DO AFTER  
ALL A MAN AS  
HONEST AS YOU'VE  
SHOWN YOURSELF  
TO BE DESERVES  
A REWARD



THE TORN AND RAGGED  
CORRELCT WHO STUMBLES  
THROUGH THAT DOOR DOES  
NOT LOOK BACK, AND THAT  
IS A FATAL ERROR...

AND YOU  
SHALL HAVE  
YOUR  
REWARD!

THE  
AMERICAN  
RED CROSS  
BLOOD BANK



EVERYTHING --  
THAT'S COMING TO  
YOU! I PROMISE!  
AND I WILL HAVE  
MINE!



EEEEEEEEEE



JOE GOT HIS JUST REWARD.  
IT WASN'T WHAT HE EXPECTED,  
BUT THEN HE DID GET MORE  
THAN HE EXPECTED... NOT  
ONE POINT, BUT TWO!  
HIGH KICK!

# CAIN'S MAIL ROOM

J-4235

Here we are again, in the ol' dungeon of the HOUSE OF MYSTERY, shovelling readers' letters into the furnace to heat up the place. It's Cain the able caretaker on the end, as assisted by Gregory the gargoyls (it's hard for Gregory to see a shovel, so he just ate the mail on fire with his breath) ... and if the March winds haven't scared you all away, there should be a crowd of loyal fans out there listening to me. There is? Good ... then I'll reward you by so-busely reading some of this tripe.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Cain,

'Day Of The Witch' had a rare theme, and a fairly unusual ending. Somehow, Jack Oleck managed to pull off a story with beautiful dialogue and atmosphere. My favorite part of the story was Aeneas's transformation into the old lady Ocampo's art was appropriate, but not all that great.

'Dog Food' took an old plotline and applied it to the dog food industry. Though the story was quite well-written, as one expects from Michael Fleisher, it wasn't original. Ramona Freder's art seemed sloppy but was still good.

However, with almost all the other mysteries magz cancelled, it seems to me that you could do better than this. A few months ago HOUSE OF MYSTERY was fantastic, and now it's just very good. Since you're the only one left, Cain, it's all up to you!

Mark Schneider, Concord, Massachusetts

Well, I always try to make HOUSE OF MYSTERY the best magazine of its kind, and I think I almost always succeed. After all, I do have the best writers and artists for my special type of story, and I'll just have to whip them harder to get them to do THEIR best!

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Cain,

I'm truly sorry for any derogatory remarks I've made in the past. Issue number 238 was fantastically good.

'Day Of The Witch' although limited to only seven pages, was the better of the two parts. It was a combination of Abe Ocampo's above-average art and Jack Oleck's very exciting script that made the tale. Abe was near to Nestor Bedondo's quality this time. All the pages were excellent. But the splash page was the best.

Jack Oleck is the master of mystery, and this story stands as tribute to that statement. He built a solid, suspenseful tale in five and a half pages, winding it up quickly, but tactfully. And best of all, he didn't cop out by not making the baby the devil.

The other story 'Dog Food' wasn't quite as good, but was a better-than-average Mike Fleisher story. It was so-so in spots, but because of the length it bogged down a bit. I was glad to see 'Mustang' Harry go, and fighngly, too. Ramona Freder was in top form which means no complaints.

All this and a new gargoyls page by Sergio Aragones! Beautiful Cain, tell Gregory that he was never in better form!

Mike White, Macdonaw, Illinois

I hope that last line doesn't mean that you're giving Gregory the credit for the whole issue. If you did something that silly you might be safe from my gargoyls's wrath, but I'd cook up an even better way to get you! After all, who do you think supplies those fitting grubs and endings for all the stories?

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Cain,

HOUSE OF MYSTERY is really fun once more. Your last few issues have shown a spark that's been lacking for years ... almost since you were left at a 25c price, in fact. And that's a long time gone.

One of the nicest things about the new HOM is the regularity with which your top three writers have been seeing print. Hardly an issue has passed this year without a story by either Michael Fleisher, David Micheline or Jack Oleck ... and frequently two of them are represented in a single issue. This is a great change from those issues which featured a cadre of forgettable writers doing soon-forgotten stories. Keep it up!

Chuck McKormick, Minneapolis, Minnesota

My stock of Micheline masterpieces is dwindling down to a dozen or so, but there's an uncountable stock of Oleck and Fleisher babies in the drawer, so you're safe for some time to come.

\*\*\*\*\*

Out of room, team ... the rest of the letters go into the fire. If you want your name to pop up into print, you'll have to send in a new letter, talking about this issue ... to me, Cain at CAIN'S MAIL ROOM, National Periodical Publications, 76 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, New York 10019.